

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 494

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor and applaud Head Coach Keith Burnett and the Father Ryan Fighting Irish Rugby Club upon capturing the Tennessee High School Rugby State Championship Cup.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly is pleased to specially honor and commend those successful high school teams that, through their magnificent exploits, bring honor to Tennessee and serve as exceptional ambassadors of this State; and

WHEREAS, led by Head Coach Keith Burnett, the Father Ryan Fighting Irish Rugby Club achieved an extraordinary level of success during the 2009 season, establishing a record of 14-2, 11-0, and winning the Tennessee High School Rugby State Championship Cup; and

WHEREAS, with their Irish Pride on display in their new purple jerseys, the Fighting Irish ruggers established dominance over the Middle Tennessee Rugby Conference during the regular season and rolled through the playoffs on their way to the state title game, exhibiting tremendous enthusiasm, toughness, and their Herculean nature along the way; during the state playoffs, they dominated Blackmon by the score of 38-0, prevailed over Coffee County 38-12, and walloped inter-conference rival Ravenwood 43-7, claiming the Middle Tennessee Rugby Conference regional championship; and

WHEREAS, the only team from the Middle Tennessee Rugby Conference advancing to the State Cup Finals, the Fighting Irish ruggers ruled the muddy pitch with an impressive scrum, towering over defending state champion Brighton High School 31-12 in the semi-final match; and

WHEREAS, Father Ryan completed their amazing season by controlling the ruck and mastering Maryville High School during the championship game in the mud by the score of 29-7, capturing the school's second state championship in three years; and

WHEREAS, the championship game was highlighted by the outstanding performances of stealthy Winger Frank Hand, exceptional Fly Half Mitchell Stoffer, and Winger Kevin Davis, who scored one try with his lightning speed and two conversions with his sure-footed kicking style; the field leadership and direction of Scrum Half Christopher “Cookie” Marshall, who added another try as well; the dominating defensive wall led by the human bullet, Christopher Agnew, hard-nose Eight-man Will Donnelly, master Lock Brandon Ward, and gritty Outside Center Nick Bateman, who added a try himself during the scoring onslaught; and the command performance and illustrious exploits of Flanker Mark Malloy, who carried several muddy Maryville players over the goal line on his way to two scores, earning him Most Valuable Player honors for the tournament; and

WHEREAS, the leadership, passion for the game, and coaching wizardry of Head Coach Keith Burnett and assistant coaches Pat McRedmond, Marty Blair, Dave Parkerson, Don Thielke, and Derek Wolfe are without peer; Coach Burnett’s precepts of playing tenacious defense, controlling the scrum, holding the ruck, sharp passing, strong running and kicking, and limiting mistakes were perfectly on display during the Fighting Irish ruggers run for the championship; and

WHEREAS, the young men of the 2009 Father Ryan Fighting Irish Rugby Club have displayed ability, teamwork, and perseverance. Henry Alexander, Christopher Agnew, Nick Bateman, Stephen Curran, Kevin Davis, Will Donnelly, Alex Glinski, Frank Hand, Sam Hohl, Casey Maher, Christopher Marshall, Mark Mulloy, Josh Murray, Stephen Nolan, Cory Norcross, Jordan Ogaz, Michael Papuchis, Hayden Snyder, Patrick Spray, Ryan Spray, Mitchell Stoffer, Patrick Van Buren, Brandon Ward, Wes Wesley, Christian White, Marshall Billingsley, Matt Bolton, Blake Faimon, Ian Kaszuba, Cole Mosley, Jake Nealey, Daniel Hunkler, Johnny Neligan, Corey Mankin, Philip Hagey, Tim Floyd, Paul Scaglione, and Will Terry, with the help of their coaches, parents, and supporters, have represented their community and the State of Tennessee in fine fashion, displaying peerless character both on and off the rugby pitch; and

WHEREAS, during this incredible championship season, the members of the 2009 Father Ryan Fighting Irish Rugby Club have etched their names onto the hearts of Tennesseans and into the annals of Tennessee sports history; their dedication, determination,

work ethic, and talent not only made possible a successful and memorable rugby season, but also surely point toward their successes in future endeavors; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate Head Coach Keith Burnett and the Father Ryan Fighting Irish Rugby Club upon capturing the Tennessee High School Rugby State Championship Cup, applaud them for their heralded success on the rugby pitch, and wish them much success in all their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.